

INFORMATION ON BOARD OF HEALTH FIELD VISITS

Russell County Health Department, Lebanon, Virginia

The Russell County Health Department is the headquarters of the Cumberland Plateau Health District, which also includes the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson and Tazewell. John J. Dreyzehner, M.D., M.P.H., is the district director. It is a typical small, rural health department office that provides an array of services to protect the public health. Environmental health services include wastewater and drinking water applications, evaluations and permits. Environmental health specialists also conduct restaurant inspections to protect the dining public and conduct rabies control efforts. Public health nurses conduct health-screening clinics to detect lead in blood, sickle cell disease, breast and cervical cancers, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases. They also provide a wide range of clinical services that protect the health of mothers and children as well as immunizations clinics that provide state-required vaccines for children.

The Laurels at Cumberland Mountain Community Service Board and Rehabilitation Center, Lebanon, Virginia

The Laurels provides non-hospital based medical detoxification and rehabilitation services to adults with alcohol and other drug problems. It is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Services include individual and group counseling. Educational sessions provide information on alcohol and other drugs plus various recreational activities that allow individuals the opportunity to discuss their problems informally with other participants. It serves residents of the Cumberland Plateau and Lenowisco health districts.

Remote Area Medical (RAM) Event, Wise, Virginia

This annual event is scheduled this year for July 28-30. The Lenowisco Health District is one of the event's main collaborative partners in the delivery of free health care to residents of Southwest Virginia. Services include vision, dental, medical, audiology and veterinary care. The event served more than 5,000 patients in three days last year. For many, this event is the only time they will see a doctor all year. Many people travel from far away to receive medical care. Remote Area Medical was founded in 1985 and is based in Knoxville, TN. Medical specialists volunteer their time to treat patients and supplies are donated.

Mission of Mercy

Virginia Dental Health Foundation (VDHF) has partnered with the Virginia Dental Association and VDA Component Societies to provide dental care in underserved areas through Mission of Mercy (MOM) projects. MOM demonstrates the commitment of the VDHF in waging the effort to fight against poor oral health

Home Visits

Board of Health members will visit the homes of some of the families the health department routinely serves in southwest Virginia. The Board will meet with families to learn more about how Virginia can meet the region's public health needs.

In the Mount Rogers District, for example, members will visit the home of six clients in VDH's Baby Care Program, a program dedicated to preventing premature births and delivering healthy babies. Public health nurses visit the women in their homes regularly and provide a variety of services to ensure they have healthy babies and the tools for good parenting. These services may include transportation, prenatal care, medication, nutritional counseling, substance abuse treatment, smoking cessation classes, child development education or homemaker services.

The Board will also visit with a breast cancer patient enrolled in VDH's Every Woman's Life Program, which provides breast and cervical cancer screening for income-eligible women age 50-64.

Environmental Health Sites in Stonega and Imboden, Virginia

The communities of Stonega and Imboden were developed around the turn of the 20th century as "coal camps" to house laborers imported to work in coal mines. Many of the camp houses had indoor plumbing, but sewage was disposed by running a straight pipe to the nearest stream, putting residents at risk for exposure to untreated sewage, which can cause serious gastrointestinal illness. Many houses in Stonega are still without the necessary plumbing to properly dispose of sewage today. Health officials are working to develop innovative methods to address coal camp communities in the area while still preserving their culture.

While Imboden shares Stonega's sewage disposal history, it has become an environmental and public health success story through the installation of a community sewage treatment system. Board of Health members will observe the discharge point of the straight pipe and tour the two-year old treatment plant.